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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **April 23, 2008**

Statewide Photography Exhibition Winners Announced

Alaska Positive 2008, the statewide photography-as-art exhibition organized every two years by the Alaska State Museum, goes on display at the museum Friday, May 2. An opening reception, hosted by The Friends of the Alaska State Museum, will take place from 4:30 to 7 p.m. The museum is located at 395 Whittier Street.

The juror for *Alaska Positive* was Bill Owens, a photographer known for his depictions of American lifestyles, most notably in the landmark book *Suburbia* that was published in 1972, depicting life in a new California tract-house development. Owens selected 56 photographs by 42 photographers for the *Alaska Positive* exhibit. Overall, 80 Alaska photographers from 10 Alaska communities submitted 267 photographs for the competition.

The top award, the Juror's Choice Award, went to Bonnie Landis of Anchorage for a photograph titled "Rooftop." Second and third place cash awards went to Ben Huff of Fairbanks and Deanna Lampe of Juneau. Brandon Hauser of Juneau received a Fourth Place award.

In addition, ten other photographers were given Honorable Mentions. They are: William Heath, Kenai; Ben Huff, Fairbanks; Jayne Jones, Kenai; Pat Kalbaugh, Juneau; Barbara Kelly, Juneau; Clark James Mishler, Anchorage; Tama Phelps, Anchorage; John Schwieder, Anchorage; Nathaniel Wilder, Anchorage; and Carol J. Zeien, Seldovia.

Commenting on the exhibition, Owens said, “There were about 270 photographs to look at and from that number I had to select the best 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th place, and 10 Honorable Mentions. As a photographer who is always involved in the documentary image, I was looking for the winners to be people who had a big vision of Alaska, and the winner was a landscape image with an abandoned building that had the composition and color, the mountains, and the mist and spoke to me over other images where the photographer failed to get the composition right, the subject material was not interesting, or the making of the image wasn’t really thought through. One thing that was conspicuously absent from the group of photographs were photos relating to other humans – a dynamic portrait. There were only a handful of portraits of people in their environment. The images tended to be random, not really giving me the photographer’s point of view of concern for the environment, or concern – passion – for other human beings... It is time for photographers to move on to photographing our environment and to show the impact that we have on the land and the sea. Today, with global warming being real, it is time for us to evaluate our lifestyles and to become concerned about how we live. Photographers should show this environment.”

Alaska Positive 2008 will remain on exhibit in Juneau through October 18, 2008. It then begins a one year tour of other museums in Alaska.

Following Friday's exhibit opening, the Alaska State Museum will be open Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will be closed Sunday and will then begin its summer schedule on Monday, May 5. Hours at the museum will be 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily except holidays. General admission is \$5. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

Examples of Owens' work can be seen on his Web site: billowens.com.

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